

TOWN OF CHESTER
15 MIDDLEFIELD ROAD
CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01011

Monday, January 12th, 2026

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES**

Open meeting – This meeting was held in the Town Hall Auditorium with a virtual option.

Selectboard members present were John Baldasaro, Craig Gauthier and Brian Forgue. Town Administrator Andrew Alward and Administrative Assistant Kim Fox were present as well as Joe Hagopian from PVPC, Michelle Kenney, and members of the public.

John Baldasaro opened the meeting at 6:00pm. Warrants, minutes and correspondence were signed.

Report from Town Departments

- Valentine's Day One Day Liquor License

John Baldasaro made a motion to approve the Valentine's Day One-Day Liquor License. Brian Forgue seconded, and the motion passed.

- Review of Town Administrator

The board expressed satisfaction with Andrew Alward's performance so far, citing progress in establishing formalized policies and procedures, strong communication, and effective teamwork.

Andrew discussed current and upcoming priorities, including hiring a new Accountant, selecting a payroll provider, and expanding departmental budget detail. He thanked the Board for their support and collaboration.

- Gateway Graduating Seniors Contribution Request

Alward presented a request made by Jason Forgue on behalf of the School Committee. Due to a local rental business closing, the high school graduation staging and chairs were purchased by a parent and donated to the school. Gateway is requesting \$2,000 from each Hilltown to reimburse the cost of the equipment, with the intent of repaying the towns through funding raised by the



students.

John Baldasaro made a motion to approve the plan. Brian Forgue seconded and the motion passed.

Report from Town Administrator

- Review and Approval of Solicitation and Distribution of Literature Policy

Brian Forgue made a motion to approve the Solicitation and Distribution of Literature Policy. John Baldasaro seconded and the motion passed.

- Review and Approval of Employee Benefits Policy

Brian Forgue made a motion to approve the Employee Benefits Policy. John Baldasaro seconded and the motion passed.

- Review and Approval of Time and Attendance Policy

Brian Forgue made a motion to approve the Time and Attendance Policy. John Baldasaro seconded and the motion passed.

- Review and Approval of Employee Performance Policy

Discussion of this policy included emphasizing operational performance in employee evaluations and the potential addition of departmental budget line items for employee training and continuing education.

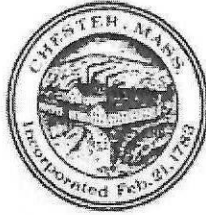
Brian Forgue made a motion to approve the Solicitation and Distribution of Literature Policy. John Baldasaro seconded and the motion passed.

- Discuss Payroll Provider and Decisions

Andrew said that he, Treasurer, and Administrative Assistant met with multiple payroll vendors. Universal Payroll did not provide sufficient proposal materials after repeated requests. Harpers offer employee portals, time clock options, and benefits tracking. Costs were comparable to other vendors reviewed.

Brian said he was comfortable proceeding with Harpers based on the recommendation of the Town Administrator and Treasurer.

John Baldasaro made a motion to accept Harpers Payroll to be the Town of Chester payroll provider. Brian seconded and the motion passed.



- Update on Town activities

Andrew said four applications have been received for the Accountant position and that interviews will be scheduled with the screening committee.

Andrew said the Highway department has been working hard with the busy workload of snow removal.

He also said that the Town Hall Expenses account has been fully expended and a transfer request may be required with the Finance Team.

- PVPC and Program Updates

Joe Hagopian of PVPC reported on a performance hearing related to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Projects include Prospect Street improvements, housing rehabilitation (four units completed with funds remaining), and public social service programs. Remaining infrastructure funds may roll into the next project phase.

Michelle Kenney presented updated Adult Education Center program materials and noted that FY25 grant funding was not awarded.

Kim Savory of the Hilltown Domestic Violence Task Force reported increased service demand. Mr. Hagopian noted that FY25 CDBG funding was highly competitive; Chester and Huntington were approved, while other Hilltowns faced more difficulty.

- Additional Updates

Craig Gauthier reported discussions with DEP regarding the wood waste landfill. DEP is willing to consider reducing certain required testing from annual to biennial, which would reduce costs. Vegetation cleanup requirements were also discussed.

Public Comment

Rich Holzman asked about the RFP for the Old Elementary School. Andrew said that posting was delayed due to an administrative issue on PVPC's end and is expected by the end of the month.

Meeting adjourned at 6:47pm



CHESTER BOARD OF SELECTMEN
and ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
15 MIDDLEFIELD ROAD
CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01011

(413) 354-7760

TownofChester.net

Kim Fox, Administrative Assistant

2/17/26
Date Signed

Selectboard:

John Baldasaro

Date Signed

Craig Gauthier

2/25/26
Date Signed

Brian Forgue

2/25/26
Date Signed